A Daily Publication of:

Affirmation

United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns

General Conference 2008 Fort Worth, TX

April 25, 2008 Issue #3

RECEIVED FEB 2 6 2024 BY:

Make Everyone a Disciple?!

by Tim Tennant-Jayne

Affirmation National Council Member

In Matthew 28:19, The Great Commandment, Christ tells the disciples to 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Creator and of the Christ and of the Holy Spirit'. We recognize this driving passion also in the life and ministry of John Wesley. Yet today his spiritual children intentionally ignore these Christian teachings.

Our *Book of Discipline, 2004*, speaks of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and queers (or specifically 'homosexuals') as being persons of sacred worth. Yet fear of being seen as financially supporting ministries that may encourage acceptance of all persons makes our denomination do nothing to care for queer persons. The United Methodist Church has decided that Christ's concept of "all the nations" really doesn't mean all people!

In addition, we violate our General Rules. Attempting to remain true to an incorrect interpretation of Scripture, we do great spiritual and emotional harm to queer persons. We do no good in helping them recognize God's love for them. We treat them as through at their very core they are useless and unworthy of God's love. Rejecting them from the church we encourage them to find acceptance and

(Commandment...Continued on page 3)

Ordained But Disconnected

Editors' Note: This article is anonymous to protect the identity of the district Board Of Ordained Ministry mentioned below. We understand their motivations for voting the way they did – fear of reprisal for voting against the Discipline. We sincerely hope we'll live long enough to see the day when we'll laugh at having had to do this.

I chuckle hopefully along with God. I've been vegan for more than 13 years, and I find myself frequently praying for God to shower United Methodists with "large sheets filled with all kinds of animals, reptiles, and wild birds," and God saying, "kill and eat!" What outlandish ways God used to get Peter's attention as we read in Acts 10.

What if Peter had not listened, not seriously listened to God's message of openness to those with genuine, earnest, life-changing faith, people inside and outside the acceptable community of faith? How many Christians

(Disconnected...Continued on page 3)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Pastoral Care Support Line 612-353-7445 thru end of GC

Soulforce Picnic In The Park with Transgender People of Faith Today 12:30 PM General Worth Square, 9th and Main.

Soulforce Street Theatre Sat 4/26 5:00 PM outside convention center.

Affirmation Out Awards Press Conference Sat 4/26 5:30 PM Intermodal Transportation Center

(Calendar...Continued on page 4)

OUT Is published daily during United Methodist General Conference 2008, Fort Worth, Texas by Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns; PO Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204.
*www.umaffirm.org, E-mail: umaffirmation_at_yahoo.com**

Only Affirmation's elected spokespersons may represent the official positions of this organization. Opinions here, signed or unsigned, are those of the writers, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Affirmation.

All articles in this publication remain the property of Affirmation, and may be used only with written permission of Affirmation.

Articles for the newsletter or comments may be sent to AffirmationNewsletter _at_yahoogroups.com*

Co-Editors:
Gary Shephard and Judy WestLee

© 2008 Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns.

Mission Statement

As an independent voice of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people, Affirmation radically reclaims the compassionate and transforming gospel of Jesus Christ by relentlessly pursuing full inclusion in the Church as we journey with the Spirit in creating God's beloved community.

Adopted January 2005

*** Note: substitute the symbol "@" for the letters "_at_" in the email addresses.**

A Prayer

By Renee Baker
A Transgender Person

This prayer was read at Cathedral of Hope in Dallas on Sunday, March 9, 2008, at a memorial service for Lawrence King.

Blessings
to those
that hate us so
Their hearts
have
not yet healed
Their
pain
its depth
and
magnitude
Must
be torture
to enshield
I pray to You
my Lord
on High
To give
them
solitude
To help them
face
their
deepest fears
That will
bring them
back to You
And I
pray to You
my Lord
my God
To help me
share my love
What more
is there
for me to do
but spread
blessings
from Above

Amen.

National Day of Silence

The National Day of Silence brings attention to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools.

This year's Day of Silence is being held in memory of Lawrence King, a California 8th-grader who was shot and killed Feb. 12, 2008, by a classmate because of his sexual orientation and gender expression.

Hundreds of thousands of students will come together today to encourage schools and classmates to address the problem of anti-LGBT behavior.

We are saddened that even 8th graders have been taught that we're "so evil" the only option open to them is to commit murder.

More information about the Day of Silence can be found at www.dayofsilence.org and at www.glsen.org.

(Commandment...Continued from page 1)

love elsewhere, even if that leads to drug use and promiscuous sex.

Legends Street Ministry in Minneapolis seeks to fill this need. Through this ministry, I provide counseling and emotional support for persons gathering in gay bars. I spend time with people, getting to know them and helping them discover that a clergy person can be worth their trust. As that trust grows, we move into deeper issues of relationships, faith, value of human life, health, and family relationships. In short, the meaningful issues of our lives that clergy frequently discuss with their parishioners.

Do I baptize any of the individuals with whom I talk? No. Church decree forbids me that option which Christ commands. Do we discuss their making a 'personal commitment to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior'? Rarely. However, we do discuss faith and how they live their beliefs in their daily lives. I encourage them to explore the religious wealth of the area and find a faith home. And by my presence, comfortably within a gay bar, I show to them that Christians do not universally hate all those whose gender or sexual orientation is different. And though my heritage is United Methodist, to be consistent in my work, I must affiliate with a congregation of another denomination that fully accepts those with whom I work.

> "Unfortunately, I am only one person, working just part time, within a single setting, in one community."

Unfortunately, I am only one person, working just part-time, within a single setting, in one community. Yet until the General Conference delegates take out the exclusionary language in the Discipline, and our denomination truly embraces the concept of the sacred worth of all of God's children, United Methodism will continue effectively ignoring Christ's Great Commandment of true evangelism.

(Disconnected...Continued from page 1)

might there be today had Peter not taken God's message to heart which then allowed him to recognize God's spirit at work in Cornelius' life?

Despite our community of faith's refusal to consider my unique gifts and graces for ministry, I won't give up on our United Methodist Church. I responded to God's personal offer of redemption to me and made my profession of faith and commitment to active membership 48 years ago.

While I've been hurt by my own community of faith, I feel proud to be a United Methodist for many reasons of which a few are:

- Our tradition of doing theology based on scripture, tradition, experience, and reason, inspired by John Wesley. I more deeply appreciate this since co-facilitating a batterers intervention group counseling and learning that women whose faith traditions insist they "be submissive to your husbands" have significantly greater inner turmoil along with outside abusive incidents before giving themselves permission to leave their partners for safety for themselves and their children.
- Our United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and our reputation for responding so quickly to emergencies around our world.
- *[Editors' note – four conference specific missions and ministries deleted to protect the identity of the district Board of Ordained Ministry]*
- Our hospitals

I was ordained a Deacon in 1975 but withdrew in the early 1980s due to internal struggles with my sexuality in the midst of hostile conference conversations regarding homosexual people regardless of our faith commitment and our gifts and graces for ministry.

When I requested approval to seek readmission to our conference as a Deacon in 2003, my District Board of Ordained Ministry closed the door to me. As I understand it,they denied my request for reconnection because I openly disclosed my

(Disconnected...Continued on page 4)

Informal Transgender Mixer Slated

Come picnic in General Worth Square today with transgender people of faith. Soulforce board member Judy Osborne, UM Affirmation spokesperson Diane DeLap, the Rev. Drew Phoenix and many others will be present.

Join us for lunch, listen to personal stories and ask questions in an informal environment.

Lunch is free for GC delegates and volunteers.

The event is sponsored by Soulforce, Transgender Advocates of Central Texas, UM Affirmation and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Institute for Welcoming resources.

General Worth square is on the north side of the convention center, across from the main entrance (Ninth street entrance.)

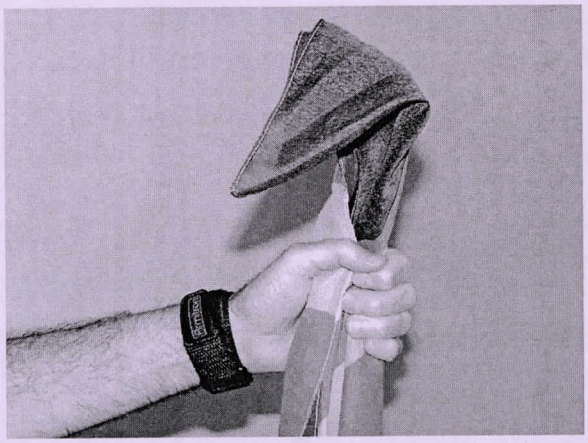
(Disconnected...Continued from page 3)

loving, committed, monogamous relationship with another United Methodist man since 1985.

Please keep me and those in similar situations in mind when our General, Annual, and Jurisdictional Conferences deal with issues related to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people of faith and our United Methodist Church.

I pray God to guide and strengthen you, and I appreciate your commitment to our United Methodist Church.

"Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented." Elie Wiesel, writer, Nobel laureate (b. 1928)



Grab an OUTIE!

They'll be available at breakfast and lunch at First Christian Church starting today

(Calendar...Continued from page 1)

Affirmation Out Awards Banquet Sat 4/26 6:00 – 8:00 PM Intermodal Transportation Center (tickets available at door $20.00)

Soulforce presents the documentary "For the Bible Tells Me So" 4/26 at dusk in General Worth Square, 9th and Main (Intermodal Transportation Center if it rains)

Soulforce Panel On History of Discrimination – Central Jurisdiction and LGBT Methodists Sun 4/27 12:30 PM General Worth Square

RMN Worship Sun 4/27 2:00 PM at First UMC Fort Worth, 800 W 5th St

Breakfast – Every day from 7:30 – 8:30 AM except Sun, First Christian Church. Last breakfast Sat 5/3.

Lunch – Every day from 12:00 – 2:30 PM except Sun, First Christian Church. Last lunch Fri 5/2.

MFSA Speaker series start Fri 4/25 1:15 – 2:00 PM except Sunday, First Christian Church

Reconciling Closing Communion Fri 5/2 after GC ends. Late.